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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/13/2013

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [YM](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES THE OPPOSITION'S ROLE WITH
THE JMP

¶1. (C) Summary: The Ambassador and DCM met with leaders of the opposition Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) coalition on February 13. The conversation focused on the political dialogue between the ruling party and the JMP and on the role the JMP is playing in remedying the problems of the country. During the meeting, however, the JMP appeared to be focused on complaints, rather than reform. End Summary

¶2. (U) The Ambassador and DCM met with leaders of the opposition Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) coalition on February 13. The meeting included General Secretary of Islah Abdulwahab al-Anisi, Assistant Secretary General of Islah Mohammed al-Saadi, Assistant General Secretary of the Yemen Socialist party (YSP) Abu-Bakr Badeeb, General Secretary of al-Haq Hassan Zaid, Chairman of Union of the Popular Forces (UPF) Mohammed al-Robaie, Deputy Chairman of UPF Mohammed al-Mutawakel, and member of the Nasrite party and Chairman of the JMP Executive Council Mohammed Sabri.

Failed Dialogue

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¶3. (C) The Ambassador asked about the status of the political dialogue between the ruling General People's Congress (GPC) party and the JMP. (Note: The political dialogue collapsed at the end of 2007 based on disagreements regarding election reform. End Note.) According to al-Anisi, Secretary General of the Islamist Islah party, the JMP is committed to the dialogue in principle, as it believes it to be a necessary means of expression and integral to peace and democracy. The problem, according to al-Anisi, is that the JMP is "confronting an authority that does not believe in dialogue."

¶4. (C) Al-Anisi explained that the government wants to have "negotiations," rather than "dialogue" with the JMP, specifying that, in his view, in negotiations the power balance is with the government, as opposed to dialogue, wherein both parties are equal. Badeeb, Assistant Secretary General of the YSP, added that "there is a great portion of society now, both in the north and south, that do not have confidence in the dialogue ... this makes the possibility of resuming the dialogue very difficult for the JMP."

Opposition's Role in Remedying Yemen's Problems

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¶5. (C) The Ambassador stressed to the JMP leadership that an "opposition that is faithful to the principles of democracy" has a vitally important role to play in the country. With this, the Ambassador asked the JMP how they saw their role in remedying the problems of Yemen. UPF Chairman al-Robaie replied that the ROYG was "creating crises" to sustain itself, and because of this policy, the "regime refuses any

positive cooperation from the opposition." Sabri, member of the Nasrite party and current Chairman of the JMP Executive Council, said that the JMP was currently studying a "salvation program," which they will present to the Yemeni population to identify the main problems in the country and come up with solutions to address them.

¶16. (C) Al-Anisi and Zaid, Secretary General of the dissolved al-Haq party, said, however, that the authorities do not allow the JMP to solve problems and pointed to the failed Saada reconciliation committee, which included members of the opposition, as proof. Zaid added that the ROYG does not want to solve most of the country's problems because instability allows the regime to "oppress and terrorize." Al-Anisi added that in this environment the ROYG is able to use the "terrorist card" to gain US support. The Ambassador reiterated the importance of the existence of "sound and democratic" alternative solutions for Yemen's pressing problems and pledged US Embassy support for democratic initiatives.

Comment

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¶17. (C) The opposition in Yemen has seemingly fallen into a culture of complaint, wherein the ruling party is blamed for all the ills of the country, and the opposition, like the rest of Yemen, continues to be the victim. Post recognizes the opposition's difficulties in surmounting the resistance of the ruling party. If, however, the JMP continues to complain and boycott, rather than engage and compromise, the GPC will succeed in dismissing the electoral reforms the JMP wants before the 2009 Parliamentary elections. End Comment
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